



March 30, 2026

TO: Saint Paul City Council
FROM: Office of Mayor Kaohly Her
SUBJECT: ORD 26-18

Council President Noecker, Council Vice President Yang, and Council Members:

We all share the same goal: ensuring Saint Paul residents can achieve housing stability and remain in their homes, especially after Operation Metro Surge.

As a state legislator, I carried many Homes for All Coalition bills to expand housing security and increase access to safe, stable housing. Tenant protections are important to me and a keystone of my legislative record.

I am concerned that this ordinance will produce the opposite result. Investing in emergency rental assistance and other proven housing assistance programs, as we have already done together, is the more responsible and sustainable path. It is also why I am working closely with the legislature to pass emergency rental assistance. I fear that often times at the City we are pulling the wrong lever at the wrong level of government. This ordinance has many signs of repeating the same mistakes.

Many nonprofit, affordable, and supportive housing providers, as well as market-rate providers, have told me this ordinance will worsen the financial strain on tenants facing eviction. Delaying court dates only prolongs residents' wait for assistance and adds another month's rent to their debt, making recovery even harder.

My own family's experience as refugees — working multiple jobs and living paycheck to paycheck — taught me how quickly falling behind can become an insurmountable setback. This ordinance risks leaving our most vulnerable residents worse off.

We saw many of these same outcomes play out during COVID, when many renters accumulated debt that still affects their financial outlook today. With the crunch of rent control still weighing heavy on the bottom lines of local, independent property owners, we will only see those expenses continue to drive up the cost of living in our city.

I believe in good policy and remain committed to solutions that expand housing stability, increase housing supply, and support tenants. For these reasons, I won't sign this ordinance. However, with the City Council's 7-0 vote, it will become law without my signature or veto.

Sincerely,

Mayor Kaohly Her
City of Saint Paul